



E

467

.1

T3C9



Class E 4-62

Book 1

T3C9
SMITHSONIAN DEPOSIT

IN MEMORIAM.

✓
Cummings

ADDRESS
AT THE BURIAL
OF
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM R. TERRILL,

October 16th, 1862,

BY THE
REV. ALEXANDER G. CUMMINS,

IN
CHRIST CHURCH, READING.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

PHILADELPHIA:
C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS.

1862.

E 467

1

T3C9

CORRESPONDENCE.

READING, October 17th, 1862.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR :

The discourse you delivered yesterday, upon the occasion of the funeral of the late General Terrill, was such an expression of our individual appreciation of his worth and character, that we would feel greatly gratified if you would allow us to have it published; so that your eloquent teachings, drawn from the blameless life and heroic death of that noble gentleman, soldier, and Christian, may live longer than in the memories of those, whose privilege it was to listen to them as they fell from your lips.

Very respectfully,

J. PRINGLE JONES,	HIESTER CLYMER,
D. McKNIGHT,	JOHN BANKS,
C. B. McKNIGHT,	DILLER LUTHER,
WM. M. HIESTER,	WM. H. CLYMER,
J. GLANCY JONES,	JOHN S. RICHARDS.

REV. A. G. CUMMINS,
Rector of Christ Church, Reading.

CHRIST CHURCH RECTORY, October 18, 1862.

GENTLEMEN :

I do not feel at liberty to refuse your request of the manuscript of my short address, upon the occasion of the funeral of the late General Terrill, for publication. But I would suggest that it be not published otherwise than for private distribution among the friends of the deceased,—as a slight memorial of patriotic and Christian virtue.

Faithfully yours,

ALEXANDER G. CUMMINS.

To the Hon. J. P. JONES, D. McKNIGHT,
and others.

A D D R E S S.

“Ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.”—Ps. LXXXII, 7.

THE Almighty Governor of the worlds, whose providence never faileth to order all things, both in heaven and earth, in His inscrutable wisdom has summoned to his Savior the soul of Brigadier-General William R. Terrill.

What mean these tokens of grief? these habiliments of mourning? Why do the people press into the courts of the Lord's sanctuary? Ah! they feel that one who was a man among men is dead; one who was as a prince in battle, has fallen like one of the princes!

You are assembled to honor the memory of the heroic dead; with hearts bowed in sorrow for the death of one who is lost not only to his family and relatives, but to you and to his country. Your loss, my friends, is indeed the nation's loss.

The country weeps with you to-day. Her heart bleeds for this her faithful son and brave defender, who lies cold in death, never more to unfurl her standard of freedom,—never more to plant her batteries against the ranks of invading enemies, or to marshal brigades on bloodstained fields for the nation's life and the nation's glory. You do well to weep for him: the country does well to weep. Ah! yes. We are gathered around the remains of a General who offered his body a willing sac-

rifice on the altar of his country. Nor only that ; but a sacrifice which must have cost him a struggle in that manly heart of hearts, whose severity and duration could be realized only by one who should be placed in precisely similar circumstances.

General Terrill was a Virginian by birth. Among the hills of Virginia he received his early training from parents who loved him as the son of bright promise, and watched the progress of his studies and the unfolding of his intellect with unwonted parental solicitude. Finding that his mind turned with strong inclination to the military profession, they sent him to West Point. His career there distinguished him above his fellows ; and his faithful habits of application to study, and the thoroughness of his acquirements, secured for him, at the end of the allotted term of study, the appointment of Assistant Professor in that institution. Although he received his professional education in the North, all his natural connections were with the South. At the age of not full twenty-eight years, when he was called upon to decide what should be his personal position toward the Government of the United States in its great crisis, he was young enough to be both impressible and impulsive ; yet being morally mature above his years, he acted with sublime independence and patriotic devotion.

When the nation was first plunged into the fiery furnace of rebellion ; when men's hearts were failing them for fear, in view of the mighty calamity which was rending society into fragments and ruthlessly severing the dearest ties of family and friendship ; when men in the North were hurrying to their relatives in the South to fight against the flag which had protected them ; and men at the South were banding together in solid masses to strike for what they called their liberty, and were

branding all who clung to the Union as miscreants. General Terrill calmly surveyed the melancholy scene of desertion and treason, and firmly stood by the flag of his beloved country, which now infolds his body for the burial. His father urged him, with earnest and tearful entreaties, to join hands with his Southern relatives and friends. His ears were filled with the supplications of those most nearly allied to him, both in social and military bonds, at the South, and the most liberal offers of rank and position in the rebel army were made to him by men occupying high places, with many of whom he enjoyed intimacy and relationship. But notwithstanding all this pressure and temptation, he unfalteringly stood by the Union and the Constitution, resolved to die in their defence. Nothing could shake his lofty purpose. Nothing could swerve him from his conscientious duty. No rank or honor could tempt him from his allegiance. Like a rock, amid the lashings of the storm-tossed waves, he stood nobly by the old State ship, which was riding almost rudderless upon the angry sea of revolution. But the severest trial was to see the love of parents and friends changing into hatred. When they found that all their efforts were unavailing to win him to their cause, they not only fell off from him, but also banished him from their fellowship. In place of entreaties, they now hurled taunts and threats of the most stinging nature at him. But dauntless, he moved above them all. Was there no sacrifice? Was there not genuine patriotism?

I have said that General Terrill was a Virginian by birth. True; but the boundaries of no one State measured his patriotism. It extended from the mountains of Maine to the plains of Texas and the golden shores of California. He loved not Virginia alone, but his whole country. His heart could beat for every State; it had a

chord for them all, which could vibrate for the weal or woe of each. His self-love was second to his love of country. It was first only as the poet has described it:

“Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race.”

The brave officer whose death we mourn, was well known to many of you, my brethren. Here in your streets you met and talked with him. You know what success attended his labors while recruiting as Captain in your midst. You saw his manly form and prince-like bearing. You looked upon the gallant Captain with pride. You had augured valiant service on the field of strife; and perhaps you prayed that it might be long-continued. Valiant service there was; but God decreed it to be not long-continued. To His will it is our part to bow in submission. And oh! why not? God holds in His hands the times and seasons. “He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.” “He hath done all things well.”

And is there no consolation in the fact that the General died like a hero?

When engaged in the dreadful conflict which proved to be his last, the issue seemed to hang in awful doubt, and the soldiers of our army were holding back from the face of carnage, which shook the earth and scattered death; he advanced to the front, where the iron hail was falling in blasting showers, and with that calmness and self-possession so characteristic of his nature, cheered on his men, and then quietly went to the batteries to sight the pieces for more effective fire. Whilst there so en-

gaged, a shell bursting in mid-air over his head sent a fragment of iron to his breast, and the brave General Terrill fell with a mortal wound. He fell "like one of the princes." The ambulance carried him from the field. With his faithful attendants around him he lingered for a short time, and then God took the soul of the hero to Himself. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

General Terrill was no less a Christian than a patriot soldier. His eminent virtue endeared him to all who knew him. He lived in communion with the Episcopal Church, and was faithful in the discharge of all his religious duties. Indeed, his Christian life, for vigorous faith in salvation by Jesus Christ, for self-denial, and charity and zeal in the spread of the Gospel, was a beautiful pattern, in every way worthy of imitation both by the civilian and the soldier. He loved his Savior as much amid the stirring scenes of the camp as in the quiet retreat of home, and under the sweet influences of the family circle. He was a practical Christian, and made his religion felt by all those with whom he came in contact. The service of the Church, as contained in the Prayer-book, he was accustomed to read to his men on each Lord's day. Thus he never forgot the Captain of his salvation; but always endeavored to serve Him by his prayers and his example.

The oath which bound him to serve his country he viewed as a high and holy thing,—as made unto God, and not with men. Whatever might have been his inclinations by nature, under the effectual guidance of Divine grace, he was so rooted and grounded in the principle of obedience to the powers constituted of God supreme, that he could not for a moment contemplate the violation of an obligation which, though assumed on

earth, was witnessed to in heaven, without a shudder. Noble Christian was he when compared with many who cast off the same obligation without a scruple! If the pure principles of Christ's Gospel had ruled the hearts and minds of our erring brethren as his spirit was ruled, it is easy to see that there would have been no rebellion to quell, no war to wage, and no wounds of country to heal. We should cherish the memory of such an example, so notable for the love of country and the love of Christ. His is a rare example; and we should direct the eyes of young men, who are leaving home and its religious influences for the toils and turmoil of the campaigns of the army, to the pattern—the Christian pattern—which the life of General Terrill has wrought.

Life's loom stops only with death: it weaves through sleep. The pattern at sunset grows till sunrise. Death snaps the thread and cuts short the pattern. Let us trust that his shall increase, though he be dead, and increase till its counterpart shall be woven in the characters of many who have gone to the defence of justice and truth. And now let us go to the grave which shall receive all that embodied the virtues of the loving husband, the good and brave officer, the pure patriot, and the faithful Christian. He is now at rest. The sword is laid aside for the sceptre of kingship with Christ. The word of command is merged in perfect obedience to God. We may not sorrow any more; "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 700 536 0

